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## 1. A compound of the formula I:

$$R_2$$
 $R_3$ 
 $R_4$ 
 $R_5$ 

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(1)

wherein the bond represented by the dotted line may be an optional double bond, and the geometry across the bond may be E or Z;

A=-COOR, -CONR'R", -CN, -COR7 wherein R, R', R" and R7 are defined below;

X = H, OH, or  $C_1$ - $C_{10}$  linear or branched alkyl or alkenyl groups, optionally substituted with COOR, carbonyl, or halo;

R = H or  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  linear or branched alkyl or aryl or aralkyl, or a pharmaceutically acceptable counter-ion;

 $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$ ,  $R_5$ ,  $R_6$  and  $R_7$  are independently H;  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 linear or branched alkyl or alkenyl groups optionally substituted; COOR where R is as defined previously; NR'R" or CONR'R", where R' and R" may be independently H or  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 linear or branched alkyl or aryl; OH;  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 alkoxy;  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 acylamino;  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 acyloxy;  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 alkoxycarbonyl; halo; NO2; SO2R'"; CZ3, where each Z is independently a halo atom, H, alkyl, chloro or fluoro-substituted alkyl; or SR'", where R'" may be H or linear or branched  $C_1$ - $C_2$ 0 alkyl; or  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  together, or  $R_5$  and  $R_6$  together may be joined to

form methylenedioxy or ethylenedioxy groups; with the proviso that when X,  $R_3$ ,  $R_5$  and  $R_4$  are H;  $R_4$  is p-hydroxy;  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  together are 3,5-dimethoxy; then the dotted line is not a double bond in the E-configuration.

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- A compound according to claim 1 wherein A=-COOR. 2.
- A compound of the formula II: 3.

(II)

wherein the bond represented by the dotted line may be an optional double bond, 10 the geometry across the bond may be E or Z, and the naphthyl group may be linked at

A=-COOR; -CONR'R", -CN, -COR, wherein R, R', R" and R, are defined below;

X = H, OH, or  $C_1$ - $C_{10}$  linear or branched alkyl or alkenyl groups, optionally substituted with COOR, carbonyl, or halo; 15

R = H or  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  linear or branched alkyl or aryl or aralkyl, or a pharmaceutically acceptable counter-ion;

 $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$ ,  $R_5$ ,  $R_6$ , and  $R_7$  are independently H;  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  linear or branched alkyl or alkenyl groups optionally substituted; COOR where R is defined previously; R; NR'R" or CONR'R", where R' and R" may be independently H or  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  linear or branched alkyl 20 or aryl; OH;  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  alkoxy;  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  acylamino;  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  acyloxy;  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  alkanoyl;  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$ alkoxycarbonyl; halo;  $NO_2$ ;  $SO_2R'''$ ;  $CZ_3$ ; where each Z is independently a halo atom, H, alkyl, chloro or fluoro-substituted alkyl; or SR'", where R'" may be H or linear or branched  $C_1\text{-}C_{20}$  alkyl or  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  together, or  $R_5$  and  $R_6$  together may be joined to form metheylenedioxy or ethylenedioxy groups.

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- 4. A compound according to claim 1, wherein A=-COOR, X,  $R_3$ ,  $R_5$  and  $R_6$  are H;  $R_4$  is p-hydroxy;  $R_1$   $R_2$  together are 3,5-dimethoxy; and the dotted line is a double bond in the Z-configuration.
- 5. A compound according to claim 4, wherein R is H.
  - 6. A compound according to claim 4, wherein R is Na+.
- 7. A compound according to claim 2, wherein  $R_4$  is p-hydroxy;  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  together are 3,5-dimethoxy and the dotted line represents a double bond.
  - 8. A compound according to claim 3, wherein  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  together are 3,5-dimethoxy and the dotted line represents a double bond.
- 9. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of diabetes comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of any one of the claims 1 to 8, or mixtures thereof, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
  - 10. A composition according to claim 9 which is suitable for oral administration.
  - 11. A method for treating diabetes comprising the step of administering to a subject suffering from a diabetic condition a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 8, or mixtures thereof, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
  - 12. A method according to claim 11 in which said compound is administered orally to said subject.
- 13. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of diabetes comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any of claims 1 to 8 in a physiologically acceptable carrier, wherein the bond represented by the dotted line may be an optional double bond, and the geometry across the bond may be E or Z;

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R = H, linear or branched  $C_1$ - $C_{20}$  alkyl, aryl or aralkyl, or a pharmaceutically acceptable counter-ion.

- 14. A composition according to claim 13, wherein R is H or Na+ and said double bond is in the E-configuration.
  - 15. A composition according to claim 13, wherein R is H or Na+ and said double bond is in the Z-configuration.
- 16. A composition according to claim 15, wherein R is Na+.
  - 17. A composition according to claim 14, wherein R is Na+.
- 18. A composition according to claim 13, wherein said composition is suitable for oral administration.
  - 19. A method of treating diabetes comprising a step of administering to a subject suffering from a diabetic condition a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any of claims 1 to 8 in a physiologically acceptable carrier, wherein the bond represented by the dotted line may be an optional double bond, and the geometry across the bond may be E or Z:
  - R=H, linear or branched  $C_1\text{-}C_{20}$  alkyl or aryl, or a pharmaceutically acceptable counter-ion.
- 25 20. A method according to claim 19, wherein R is H or Na+ and said double bond is in the E-configuration.
  - 21. A method according to claim 19, wherein R is H or Na+ and said double bond is in the Z-configuration.

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- 22. A method according to claim 20, wherein R is Na+.
- 23. A method according to claim 21, wherein R is Na+.